

April 24, 1952

MEMORANDUM FOR: MEMBERS OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL STRATEGY BOARD
SUBJECT: Action Regarding Current Cold War Tactical Measures

From the outset, the Director has been troubled about the extent to which the Board and the Director should participate in the handling of the tactics of current psychological operations, as typified by the present Soviet "germ warfare" campaign.

Except for a period early last Fall, when a small "Watch" Committee functioned to advise the Director as to actions which he or the Board should take with respect to such matters, the Director has resisted attempts to draw his staff into these problems. This position was taken for the following reasons:

- (a) PSB is primarily concerned with the development of strategic psychological programs. Involvement in current operations could seriously detract from the ability of a small staff to carry out effectively this primary function.
- (b) Since the staff cannot keep in touch with current developments as easily, the best means of handling current problems usually can be determined by the appropriate desks in State, Defense and CIA.
- (c) With particular regard to current developments affecting foreign information operations, a mechanism already exists in the Psychological Operations Coordinating Committee which, if fully availed of, could effectively dispose of these issues at the weekly meetings of the POC or the daily meetings of its Planning Staff.

On the other hand, it is apparent that the Board is in a better position than POC to dispose of some current questions. It is also true that the Director and his staff, by being detached from operations, can often identify problems and have a judgment as to their significance which would be useful to the "operators". It is, therefore, likely that a Board position should be established, which would permit some review of all current psychological issues, but which would fall short of either an interference with the proper functioning of POC in its area of activity, or an undue absorption of the time of the Board and its staff with these problems.

Such a position was suggested by [redacted] at the informal meeting of the Board on April 10, as follows: On his own motion, or

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upon the request of a member of the Board, the Director will bring informally to the attention of each of the members of the Board important tactical issues, current or anticipated, as lie within the Board's cognizance. Each Board member will then have an inquiry made within his department or agency to determine the views of his department or agency, together with a report regarding steps being taken to handle or dispose of the matter. These reports will be discussed between the Board members at the next luncheon meeting, or sooner if the importance of the question requires it. After discussion, the Board will make any decision and allocate any assignment for continuing follow-up or other investigation that it deems appropriate. Such assignments may be made to the PSB staff, among others.

My impression was that there was agreement over the foregoing among those present at the meeting, and, if the Board agrees, I recommend that it be adopted on a trial basis for the time being. In recommending this, however, I would like to make the following additional suggestions as to the manner in which it will be carried out:

- (a) Except when directed otherwise by the Board, the Director and staff should not initially spend more time on any given issue than is necessary to identify the problem as being one of sufficient importance to require Board consideration and to develop a judgment as to its scope and character.
- (b) The Director and staff should seek to develop questions which relate to operations of an aggressive and positive character, as distinguished from reactions to moves made by the Kremlin.
- (c) Whether the Board decides that no action on its part is needed, or agrees upon a given course of action to be carried out by one or more departments or agencies, the departments or agencies which are directly concerned with an issue raised by the Board should be asked to report subsequently their evaluation of their handling of it. The purpose of this would be to add to the Board's perspectives in making future decisions.

Distribution:
Board Members

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Director

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